

Advisory Council Information Bulletin
June 2003

Florida Key National Marine Sanctuary

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Law Enforcement hosted 10 park rangers from Belize for a week, including the Memorial Day Weekend. The guests accompanied law enforcement officers aboard coastal patrol vessels as well as a trip to the Dry Tortugas. The rangers learned about methods in effectively patrolling and protecting coastal and marine resources in heavily visited areas.

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

Endangered sea otters in California in 1998-2001 died in unusually high numbers from newly recognized diseases and in geographic clusters. Some 100 southern sea otters (some Sanctuary "residents"), mostly adults, have washed up dead from parasitic and other problems on California beaches this year alone. The species' coastal environment may be so substantially altered that the species could be in jeopardy, according to researchers with the California Dept. of Fish and Game and scientists at University of California, Davis. The University researchers note that in a healthy population, juvenile and aged otters should account for most deaths, but their analysis found that 47 percent of the deaths were 4 to 9 years old, an age range when the animals should have been most healthy. The analysis is expected to be published this year in the "Journal of Wildlife Disease."

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Over 100 local residents geared up for Snapshot Day on May 17, 2003, led by the Sanctuary Citizen Watershed Monitoring Network. In the sanctuary region, these trained volunteers sampled local creeks, rivers and stormdrains in 110 different water bodies from Pacifica to Morro Bay. For the first time, this event initiated within the MBNMS has now spread statewide, and coastal water bodies from the Oregon Border to Mexico were monitored for basic water quality parameters. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation managed the statewide effort with a grant from EPA.

Northwest Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and Proposed Sanctuary

The Reserve/proposed Sanctuary opened the Discovery Center in Hilo, Hawaii. The new, interactive educational facility utilizes a variety of learning tools to teach visitors and school students about Hawaii's oldest islands and atolls. The center emphasizes marine life, and the natural and cultural resources contained within the nation's largest conservation area.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

A Special Issue of the Marine Technology Society Journal dedicated to Science, Technology, and Management in the National Marine Sanctuary Program", is now available (Vol 37 No 1). The Issue, edited by SBNMS Research Coordinator, James Lindholm, features peer-reviewed research from around the Program. For more information, please visit: www.mtsociety.org.

National Marine Sanctuary Program

More than 100 scientists, educators and resource managers met in Honolulu to lay the groundwork for a regional action plan for one of the nation's unique marine treasures, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The National Marine Sanctuary Program sponsored the first collaborative workshop of its kind in more than 20 years. Participants in the "Information Needs for Conservation and Management: A Workshop on the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands" identified priority scientific and informational needs for understanding and managing the marine waters and associated habitats and resources of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program announces the online release of Responsibly Watching California's Marine Wildlife: Handbook for Ocean Users. The handbook, a collaboration between the NMSP and NOAA's Fisheries, was first introduced during a California Marine Wildlife Viewing Workshop held on February 27th, 2003. Through this and future workshops, the sanctuary program hopes to develop a refined wildlife viewing handbook for California and eventually a comprehensive marine

wildlife viewing program for all of the sanctuaries. The report can be downloaded at <http://www.sanctuaries.nos.noaa.gov/library.html>.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation hosted the Capitol Hill Oceans Week in honor of June 8th Oceans Day. A series of ocean-related sessions were conducted for three days on the Hill and there was significant attendance by several Members of Congress (Sen. Fritz Hollings, Rep. Jim Saxton, Rep. Lois Capps, Sen. Sam Farr, Rep. Billy Tauzin, Rep. Neil Abercrombie, Thomas Allen, Curt Weldon), leaders representing ocean industries and interests such as Admiral James D. Watkins, USN (Ret.), Chairman, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy; Dr. Shirley Pomponi, Jean-Michel Cousteau, NMS Foundation Trustee and President of Ocean Future Society; Dr. Sylvia Earle, NMS Foundation Trustee and National Geographic Society Explorer-in-Residence; Dr. Shirley Pomponi, Vice President, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution; Tom Fry, National Ocean Industries Association; and, Terry Garcia, Vice President of Missions Program, National Geographic Society.

Sen. Fritz Hollings (D-S.C.), and Rep. Jim Saxton (R-N.J.) received the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation's Leadership Award on June 10 at an event at the Ronald Reagan Building. Actress, model and amateur diver Lauren Hutton served as master of ceremonies. Dan Basta, director of the National Marine Sanctuary Program served as the emcee. The Foundation presented the first-ever Volunteer of the Year Award to two gentlemen: Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary Beach Watch volunteer Gordon Bennett was selected because he contributed 2,000 hours annually monitoring beaches, assists with oil spill response and investigating human impacts on wildlife. Olympic Coast volunteer Alan Brooks was honored for serving as the Chairman of the Sanctuary's Advisory Council for over 2 years dedicating countless hours guiding the Council in advising the Sanctuary on tribal issues and public concerns. There was mention of the Foundation's award event in the June 11, 2003 Washington Post. Additional information on the Foundation can be found at: www.nmsfocean.org